

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY REL 238 – RELIGIONS OF THE WEST (3 CR.)

Course Description

Studies major religious traditions originating in the Near East, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Examines origins, values, ethics, teachings, and practices. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week.

Please Note: Credit will not be awarded for both REL 238: Religions of the West and REL 232: Religions of the World II.

General Course Purpose

REL 238 introduces students to the history, teachings, organization, and practices of Western religious traditions with an emphasis on their role in motivating, shaping and inspiring their adherents through myths, rituals, symbols, ethical teachings, and religious experiences.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

None.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

Civic Engagement: Cultural and Social Understanding

- Respectfully engage with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Appreciate the value of religious diversity in the world and in the local community.

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- Respectfully engage with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.
- Appreciate the value of religious diversity in the world and in the local community.
- Discuss the historical and ideological connections among the religions studied.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze the complex relations between religion and society/culture in various historical and contemporary contexts.
- Compare and contrast recurring themes in the religions studied such as God, prophecy, sin and salvation, mysticism, scripture and tradition, religious leadership, worship and ritual, ethics, etc.

Professional Readiness

- Positively interact and cooperate with others in a mutually supportive environment (work, school, community).
- Be a model of tolerance and respect for others.

Judaism

- Identify, define and accurately use terminologies such as Tanakh, covenant, Torah, Bar mitzvah, diaspora, prophets, Talmud, Kosher, etc.
- Identify and discuss the Biblical persons, places, and events important to Judaism, including Abraham, Moses, David, The Exodus, The Promised Land, etc.
- Discuss the significant historical developments of Judaism, from the Patriarchs through Rabbinic Judaism to contemporary times, including development of the modern “movements” that exist in Judaism today.
- Outline the major Jewish holy days and life cycle observations

- Discuss everyday Jewish practices e.g. dietary regulations, symbols, prayer, synagogues, etc.
- Summarize the basic beliefs, practices and ethical teachings of Judaism.
- Analyze the impact that persecution and antisemitism have had on Judaism and the Jewish people, e.g., Pogroms, Zionism, the Holocaust, etc.

Christianity

- Identify, define and accurately use relevant terminologies such as Gospels, Christ, Trinity, atonement, salvation, sacrament, resurrection, Original Sin, Sacrament, etc.
- Explain the founding of Christianity with focus on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles.
- Discuss the significant historical developments of Christianity from the first century development of the New Testament texts, through the reformation, and contemporary issues.
- Summarize the basic beliefs, practices, and ethical teachings of Christianity.
- Compare and contrast the various Christian denominations (Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and others) from a historical, doctrinal, ritual and values perspective.

Islam

- Identify, define and accurately use relevant terminologies such as Quran, Hadith, Tawhid, jihad, Sunnis, Shi'ites, Shari'ah, Five Pillars of Islam, etc.
- Outline the life of Muhammad and events related to the origins and development of Islam, including the spread of Islam and division between Sunni and Shi'ite.
- Discuss the origins, format and content of the Quran.
- Summarize the basic beliefs, practices and ethical teachings of Islam.
- Analyze and evaluate contemporary social and political issues as they relate to Islam.

Additional topics may include: Baha'i, Zoroastrianism, New Religious Movements and religion in the twenty- first century

- Identify, define and accurately use relevant terms and names associated with the religion(s).
- Explain the origins and early historical development of the religion(s).
- Summarize the basic beliefs, practices, and ethical teachings of the religion(s).
- Discuss unique features and/or values of the religion(s).

Major Topics to be Included

- Judaism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Additional Religions, as time allows